

was no son. God has hosts of sons and daughters. Natural adoption was only of sons. But God says to all true believers, "I will be a Father to you and ye shall be my sons and daughters." There is no distinction, neither male nor female, bond or free. Christ is all and in all. In natural adoption there was only a change of condition. The child never became really the son of the adopted; but God makes his children partakers of his own nature and imprints his own image on them; they are his spiritual children by regeneration as they are his creatures by creation. Heb. 2:10. In natural adoption only one was adopted, but God adopts millions of sons and daughters. His seed shall be as numerous as sand on the sea shore. In natural adoption only temporal advantages were derived, but in spiritual adoption the benefits are eternal. The fruits of the spirit peace, joy, comfort in the Holy Ghost; hence the Christian walks in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. We shall appear as the sons of God, be enrolled in the family book, be found in the service of our Master Jesus.

God's family has its laws, its specific rules, for the government of itself and for the direction of its conduct toward those who are without. "If ye love me keep my commandments." The gospel of Jesus Christ is the law by which the Christian's life is to be governed.

When the Ethiopian eunuch came in contact with the stream of adoption thru reading Esaias the prophet, God had an organ of clay prepared to meet him at that point whose name was Philip. The spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to meet him. He did not walk, but ran. Suppose a traditional Elder of a later date would have met the eunuch as Philip did and demanded baptism at his hands, the Elder would have said, I must call a council of the church before I can baptize thee. But Philip was not one of that kind. All Philip asked was, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. The eunuch said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Then Philip baptized him. Then the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Peace and pardon were obtained thru adoption into the family of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise God for the stream of salvation thru Christ Jesus.

*Rosena, Cal.*

#### THE NEED OF A CATECHISM FOR THE BRETHREN CHURCH

*A paper read by D. F. Eikenberry at the Ohio State Conference held at Bryan, O., June 6-9, 1901.*

We believe the Brethren church has a special mission to fulfill; we believe she has been called by God; we believe she was founded and is standing on principles that are in accord with the divine will of God; and we also believe that the best opportunities and the greatest possibilities for the highest Christian development are found in

her doctrines. And it is admitted that every legitimate means should be used to extend the doctrines of the Brethren church to all parts of the world, giving all men, so far as possible, the blessed privileges of soul development we are enjoying.

Yes, says some one, we admit all of that, but is a catechism a legitimate means? Yes, we believe it is. For anything that may be used to the good of the church without detracting from God's cause is a legitimate means. And with my present knowledge of the catechism as to its effect upon a people either for good or bad, or upon the beliefs and lives of a people who use it, I believe it may be used with great advantage. Hence we should be willing at least to investigate, if not accept, a catechism if it tends to advance the cause of the church, providing that instrument is in harmony with God's will. And if it will advance God's cause on earth, be the instrument what it may—old or new—we violate the will of God if we do not employ it.

I shall endeavor to show first how a catechism will lead to more intelligent study of the Bible. It will encourage systematic Bible study. There is very much reading of God's word in a disjointed way. People read a book there, a chapter here and a chapter there, a verse here and a verse there, not regarding the connections and relations that exist between the various parts of the Bible. They seem to forget that there is unity in God's word and to understand revelation best this unity must be in mind. It is possible to bind ourselves so closely to certain passages of scripture, not considering the common whole, that we get a very narrow conception of revelation. We get too close, so to speak, so close that our vision must, for such a position, be narrow; but standing off some distance as it were, our field of vision becomes wider and higher. To use an illustration I have heard one of the Prof. use in class will make it clearer. In order to get an intelligent idea of the various parts of a large house, as to their size and relation to each other, we do not walk up against it. But stand some distance away. Then we are able to see it as a whole. Our field of vision is larger and we see more of it at once. So it is with God's word. Many people have their eyes fixed so closely upon their favorite passages, or doctrines that they fail to see the great unity which makes the Bible a unique book. I believe in getting close to the Bible the closer the better, but I oppose blinding ourselves to certain parts at the expense of the whole. Suppose one were to read Luke 14:26, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; or read Rev. 22:11 or other passages, then closing the book without considering the general context, he would be deceived. This may be an extreme illustration, yet it shows what is almost sure to follow in an

unsystematic study. The same result would be true in science, in history, in literature or in language, if pursued in an unsystematic way.

Such reading the catechism will tend to correct. For if it is intelligently arranged, the various themes will be taken up in logical order. First the simple thoughts in a simple way, and as the student grows in the light and strength of mind then the more complex and profound questions. Thus step by step upwards, higher and higher the student may go until he can stand on a lofty height viewing revelation from a position that will give him a commanding view of God and his Holy will. He will be able to see growth, unity and an eternal purpose running through the entire Bible.

As a result of systematic reading the Bible will become more simple and less mysterious. To most young people and many older ones too, the Bible is obscured in mysteries. Now and then they get a glimpse of the bright light as it penetrates through the dark shadows which hover about them like the fogs of New Foundland. This obscurity should not be, and there is no necessity for it. It is the natural result of much of the present methods of teaching. We speak of the simplicity of the Bible, and can with a great degree of truth, for even the word itself speaks of its simplicity. Yet there is a complexity in the word and many profound saying. How could it help be other wise having been written by so many different authors, and covering a lapse of so many centuries; recording God's revelation as it was given to man from time to time; recording a tremendous effort on man's part to reconcile himself to God by the aid of revelation and God's never ceasing chastisements and loving care; recording human experiences with the Divine in times of war and peace, famine and prosperity, persecution restoration, and in times of darkest spirituality and greatest light. A book of so great themes written under such varied conditions covering so long a time, and written by so many men of such varied experiences must contain complex, profound and eternal themes. It cannot be simple in the strictest sense, to the young and uncultured mind. A catechism if intelligently arranged will tend to simplify by developing each theme without covering it in mysteries. For after the teachings are arranged in a systematic order, the more difficult themes yet remain to be simplified, so the young mind may grasp them. This may be accomplished by asking and answering questions in a simple way, using simple and clear language that the young mind may understand. For the mind can grasp the interpretation easier if put as it should, than interpret the thought from the text. Especially is this true if the reader does not understand the circumstances of the text, which are so essential for an intelligent interpretation.

A catechism will emphasize our distinctive church doctrines. It is not belief in